

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

March 1, 2024

Ms. Sharon Buccino
Principal Deputy Director
Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement
1849 C Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20240

Principal Deputy Director Buccino,

We write today to urge the Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement (OSMRE) to complete the environmental impact statements (EIS) or supplemental environmental impact statements (SEIS) for the Bull Mountains, Spring Creek, and Rosebud coal mines in Montana expeditiously and within the timelines required for the mines to continue operation. At present, OSMRE has delayed the proposed completion date for each mine's Record of Decision (ROD) well past the original deadlines and past the point where the mine has permitted coal to continue operations. OSMRE's continuing refusal to finish the environmental reviews in a timely manner and contrary to representations to the federal courts will have a devastating economic impact in Montana.

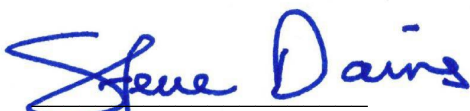
For example, the Bull Mountains Mine is a substantial economic driver in Musselshell and Yellowstone Counties and is the lifeblood of many rural communities in southcentral Montana. Yet, OSMRE currently estimates that the court ordered EIS will not be completed until July 2026, more than two years after OSMRE committed to the court that its analysis would be finished and many months after the mine runs out of permitted coal. This same pattern is also playing out at the Rosebud and Spring Creek mines where OSMRE has estimated completion dates after the court ordered deadlines. Both mines are major economic drivers for eastern Montana, employing hundreds of Montanans, including union and tribal members, and generating millions in federal, state, and local taxes and royalties. OSMRE has suspiciously delayed the completion of the environmental reviews time and time again leading us to seriously question the intent behind OSMRE's environmental review processes.

For these reasons we ask that you provide the following information:

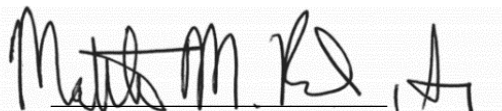
1. For each mine and each occurrence, please describe the specific reasons why OSMRE has not been able to complete the required EIS or SEIS on the timeframe originally promised.
2. Please identify the date OSMRE anticipates issuing a ROD for each mine.
3. Please explain how you will work with the operators of each mine to accelerate the environmental review process so that a ROD is issued before each mine runs out of permitted coal.

The operations at Bull Mountains, Spring Creek, and Rosebud mines are vital to the prosperity of Montana's rural communities, the state as a whole, energy independence, and American security interests. We urge you to follow the law, court ordered deadlines and commitments, and the needs of the communities and complete the environmental reviews in a timely manner.

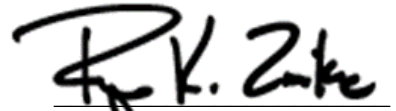
Sincerely,



Steve Daines
United States Senator



Matthew M. Rosendale, Sr.
Member of Congress



Ryan K. Zinke
Member of Congress